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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

PROBABLE SOVIET BLOC COURSES OF ACTION, THROUGH MID-1953

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All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 1 December 1952 with the exception of the dissents of the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army, to paragraph 29, noted on page 5.

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¹For information on Soviet Bloc military and political warfare capabilities, see NIE-64 (Part I), "Soviet Bloc Capabilities, through Mid-1953" (12 November 1952). The material in NIE-64 (Part I) provides essential background information for this estimate.

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NIE-64 (Part II): PROBABLE SOVIET BLOC COURSES OF ACTION, THROUGH MID-1953

THE PROBLEM

To determine probable Bloc courses of action, through mid-1953.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that during the period of this estimate the rulers of the USSR will offer no real concessions to effect a settlement between the Bloc and the West and will pursue courses of action designed to frustrate or offset any gain in the Western power position.

2. The USSR will continue its efforts to undermine and destroy the non-Communist world by political warfare.* The Kremlin probably estimates that conditions will not be favorable during the period of this estimate for successful armed revolt by Communist parties in non-Communist countries. It probably also estimates that conditions will not be ripe for bringing additional areas into the Bloc by armed aggression without incurring serious risk of global war.

3. For the foregoing reasons, the Kremlin, during the period of this estimate, will intensify its efforts to isolate the US and to promote dissension within and

among non-Communist countries. To attain these ends, Communist parties in non-Communist countries, through front organizations and by influencing local political organizations and groups, will seek to exploit neutralist, nationalist, racial, and anti-American sentiments, and to stimulate demands for freer East-West trade.

4. At the same time, the USSR and the Chinese Communists will continue to support existing Communist-dominated armed rebellions, such as those in Indochina and Malaya. Moreover, they will remain prepared to instigate or exploit new armed rebellions, should advantageous circumstances develop.

5. It is impossible to estimate with confidence the view of the rulers of the USSR concerning the outcome of a global war during the period of this estimate. The Bloc continues to possess a significant quantitative superiority over the Western Powers in forces in being and in conventional ground and air armament. Moreover, the possibility cannot be excluded that during the period of this estimate Soviet atomic capabilities may in-

*Bloc political warfare techniques include political and economic pressure, diplomatic action in the UN and elsewhere, propaganda and front activities, the action of Communist parties and Communist party-controlled trade unions outside the Bloc, sabotage, exploitation of subversive and revolutionary movements and of civil wars, and psychological warfare.

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crease to a point at which the Kremlin might conclude that a surprise attack could inflict critical damage on the war potential of the US. On the other hand, it almost certainly estimates that global war would involve at a minimum widespread destruction in the USSR and the risk that its system of control would be destroyed.

6. We believe it unlikely that the Kremlin will within the period of this estimate deliberately initiate or provoke global war, or undertake new acts of armed

aggression which it estimates would involve grave risk of global war. If, however, it believes the security of the USSR is jeopardized by a Western action, it will probably resort to such counteractions as it considers necessary, even though it recognizes that these counteractions involve grave risk of global war.

7. Moreover, inherent in the relationship between the US and the USSR there is danger that global war may result from an action or a series of actions not intended to have that result.

DISCUSSION

Introduction

8. The Kremlin determines the fundamentals of Bloc policy. It will continue to make decisions concerning courses of action in particular situations in the light of its global policy and of its estimate of the world power situation.

9. We believe that Communist China accepts Kremlin leadership in the determination of international Communist policy. However, we believe that the Peiping regime retains some capability for independent action, and is in a position to influence the formulation of Communist policy in the Far East.

10. The Satellites have no direct influence upon decisions concerning Bloc courses of action, although the Kremlin, in formulating policy regarding Europe, may take into account national feeling in the Satellite countries. Communist parties in non-Communist countries have no appreciable influence upon Kremlin decisions.

11. We believe that Kremlin policies and courses of action are directed toward the maintenance and extension of Soviet power, which to the Kremlin are indispensable for the attainment of the long-range objective, a Communist world dominated from Moscow.

Likelihood of Global War

12. The Kremlin almost certainly estimates that in some respects the position of the West is stronger than it was in the early postwar years:

a. The US is making progress in the development of its economic and military power and is increasingly exercising leadership in the West.

b. Progress has been made in the economic and political reconstruction of Western Europe.

c. The non-Communist position in Asia³ is stronger than in 1950, largely as a consequence of UN resistance in Korea.

d. Progress has been made toward the unification and rearmament of Western Europe and toward improving the West's defenses in the Pacific.

13. The Kremlin undoubtedly believes that enmity between the US and the USSR will continue. The Kremlin probably regards the following not only as obstacles to the attainment of Bloc objectives but also as threats to the security of the Bloc:

³ Asia, as used in this paper, includes Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Ceylon, and all of mainland Asia east of (but not including) Iran and Afghanistan.

a. The development of US overseas bases close to Bloc territory.

b. The increase of US strategic air strength.

c. US rearmament, including the rapid development and production of atomic weapons and the development of thermonuclear weapons.

d. NATO rearmament, and the program for rearming West Germany and for integrating West Germany into a rearmed Western Europe.

e. The program for rearming Japan, and the alliance of Japan with the West.

14. Within the period of this estimate, however, the Kremlin is unlikely to conclude that the US will be militarily or psychologically prepared to initiate global war against the Soviet Bloc. However, it almost certainly believes that global war might result from actions and counteractions in local situations, such as Korea.

15. The rulers of the USSR almost certainly believe that opportunities will continue to exist for making progress toward both their immediate and their long-range objectives without resort to global war. They probably estimate that:

a. Western political unity and Western prosperity are likely to be undermined by future developments, such as the revival of West German military power, the intrusion of German and Japanese products into export markets now dominated by other states, and conflicting tariff and trade policies.

b. Opportunities exist for weakening the West by exploiting discontent and nationalist aspirations in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.

c. The political systems and the economies of the non-Communist states are brittle, and vulnerable to depression and inflationary crises which would have damaging social and political repercussions.

d. By contrast, the prestige and influence of the Bloc will mount as the political and economic strength and unity of the Bloc continue to make steady progress.

16. It is impossible to estimate with confidence the view of the rulers of the USSR concerning the outcome of a global war during the period of this estimate. The Bloc continues to possess a significant quantitative superiority over the Western Powers in forces in being and in conventional ground and air armament. Moreover, the possibility cannot be excluded that during the period of this estimate Soviet atomic capabilities may increase to a point at which the Kremlin might conclude that a surprise attack could inflict critical damage on the war potential of the US. On the other hand, it almost certainly estimates that global war would involve at a minimum widespread destruction in the USSR and the risk that its system of control would be destroyed.

17. We believe it unlikely that the Kremlin will within the period of this estimate deliberately initiate or provoke global war, or undertake new acts of armed aggression which it estimates would involve grave risk of global war. If, however, it believes the security of the USSR is jeopardized by a Western action, it will probably resort to such counteractions as it considers necessary, even though it recognizes that these counteractions involve grave risk of global war.

18. Moreover, inherent in the relationship between the US and the USSR there is danger that global war may result from an action or a series of actions not intended to have that result.

PROBABLE BLOC 'COURSES OF ACTION

General

19. We believe that during the period of this estimate the rulers of the USSR will offer no real concessions to effect a settlement between the Bloc and the West and will pursue courses of action designed to frustrate or offset any gain in the Western power position.

Probable Courses of Action

Within the Bloc

20. During the period of this estimate, the USSR will almost certainly continue to place primary emphasis within the Bloc upon ex-

panding Bloc productive capacity, especially in those industries basic to industrial growth and to military production.

21. The Kremlin will almost certainly place a high priority upon enlarging its atomic stockpile and improving its defenses, especially against air attack. Bloc military forces will not increase greatly in size, although they will improve in combat effectiveness.

22. The program for integrating the European Satellites into the Soviet economic, political, and military system will continue. The reorganization of East Germany along Soviet lines and preparations for the incorporation of that area into the Bloc as a Satellite will also continue. Soviet efforts to extend and intensify control over Communist China will be maintained, but not at the risk of impairing Sino-Soviet solidarity.

Probable Courses of Action Beyond the Bloc

23. The USSR will continue its efforts to undermine and destroy the non-Communist world by political warfare.⁴ The Kremlin probably estimates that conditions will not be favorable during the period of this estimate for successful armed revolt by Communist parties in non-Communist countries. It probably also estimates that conditions will not be ripe for bringing additional areas into the Bloc by armed aggression without incurring serious risk of global war.

24. For the foregoing reasons, the Kremlin, during the period of this estimate, will intensify its efforts to isolate the US and to promote dissension within and among non-Communist countries. To attain these ends, Communist parties in non-Communist countries, through front organizations and by influencing local political organizations and groups, will seek to exploit neutralist, nationalist, racial, and

⁴ Bloc political warfare techniques include political and economic pressure, diplomatic action in the UN and elsewhere, propaganda and front activities, the action of Communist parties and Communist party-controlled trade unions outside the Bloc, sabotage, exploitation of subversive and revolutionary movements and of civil wars, and psychological warfare.

anti-American sentiments, and to stimulate demands for freer East-West trade.

25. At the same time, the USSR and the Chinese Communists will continue to support existing Communist-dominated armed rebellions, such as those in Indochina and Malaya. Moreover, they will remain prepared to instigate or exploit new armed rebellions, should advantageous circumstances develop.

Western Europe

26. We estimate that in Western Europe the Kremlin will give priority to attempting to prevent or delay unification and rearmament. It will seek to play upon anti-American sentiment, and upon national rivalries and fears, particularly upon French fear of a revived West Germany and upon German craving for the reunification of Germany. Local Communist parties will attempt to influence other groups within the countries of Western Europe, through a program based upon anti-Americanism, the fear of war, the costs of rearmament, the threat posed to national sovereignty by the movement to unify Western Europe, and the advantages to Western Europe of expanded East-West trade.

27. The rulers of the USSR almost certainly regard the rearmament of West Germany and the integration of West Germany with the West as a serious obstacle to the achievement of Soviet objectives and as an eventual threat to Bloc security. However, they probably estimate that ratification of the European Defense Community (EDC) agreements will be delayed until at least the early spring of 1953, and that developments in West Germany, France, or elsewhere may delay indefinitely, or even prevent the implementation of the EDC agreements. We believe, therefore, that in its efforts to prevent West German rearmament and integration with the West the Kremlin will not, within the period of this estimate, adopt courses of action which it estimates would involve grave risk of global war.

28. The expulsion of the Western Powers from Berlin will remain a basic Soviet objective. We believe that the Kremlin, using the East German Government (GDR) as its instru-

ment, will increase its efforts to undermine the West Berlin economy. These efforts will probably include moves to seal off West Berlin from East Germany and East Berlin, and to harass traffic between West Germany and West Berlin. If the contractual and EDC agreements are ratified, the likelihood of extreme harassing tactics will probably increase substantially and progressively. The GDR may even threaten to use force in order to test Western unity and resolution.

29. We believe, however, that the Kremlin probably now estimates that the use of armed force in Berlin either by the USSR or by the GDR would be met by force on the part of the US and the other Western occupying powers, and that measures short of force would be countered to the maximum of Western capabilities. Furthermore, the Kremlin probably estimates that the US at least would now be resolved to resort to force if the Western position in Berlin became or were about to become untenable. The danger of global war over Berlin will remain great. However, we estimate that in the pursuit of its objectives toward Berlin to mid-1953, the Kremlin will avoid courses of action which it estimates would involve grave risk of global war.^{5 6}

Asia⁷

30. The Communists probably estimate that an attempt to seize additional territory in Asia by the identifiable use of Chinese Com-

munist or Soviet forces would stiffen non-Communist opposition, particularly in Asia, and might create grave danger of war against mainland China or even of global war. Moreover, the Communists are probably confident that further progress can be made towards the achievement of their objectives in Asia by political warfare. We believe, therefore, that during the period of this estimate the Communists will refrain from attempts to seize additional territory by the identifiable use of Chinese Communist or Soviet forces.

31. We believe that during the period of this estimate the Communists will not intensify their efforts to overthrow non-Communist Asian governments by the open rebellion of indigenous "armed liberation" movements. Existing movements have been reduced in effectiveness or stalemated, and the overthrow of non-Communist governments through open rebellion would now require Chinese Communist or Soviet intervention of such magnitude as to entail the possibility of war against mainland China or even global war.

32. We believe that throughout the period of this estimate the Communists will give a high priority to strengthening their organization in non-Communist Asian countries, weakening Asian ties with the West, and exploiting Asian neutralism. They will also seek to increase their popular following in Asia. The Bloc will increase its use of economic inducements to influence the governments and peoples of Asia. At the same time, they will make organizational and psychological preparations for the intensification of the "armed liberation" movements at a later date.

33. *Korea.* The Communists will probably not take the initiative to break the military stalemate in Korea during the period of this estimate. We believe that the Communists will protract armistice negotiations so long as they consider that they can continue to gain political and military advantages from the situation in Korea.

34. If an armistice is concluded during the period of this estimate, we believe that the negotiation of a political settlement will be complicated by Communist injection of Far Eastern issues unrelated to Korea. Whether

⁵ The Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, dissents from this paragraph because it implies that the Kremlin, because of unwillingness to risk war, would stop the measures envisaged in paragraph 28 short of a point where "the Western position in Berlin became or were about to become untenable." The Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, believes that a campaign of gradual strangulation against West Berlin in the hope of making the position of the Western powers in Berlin untenable cannot be ruled out on these grounds.

⁶ The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army, supports the dissent of the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, noted in footnote 5 above.

⁷ Asia, as used in this paper, includes Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Ceylon, and all of mainland Asia east of (but not including) Iran and Afghanistan.

or not a political settlement is achieved, we believe that the Communist objective to gain control of all Korea will remain unchanged.

35. *Japan.* The weakening of Japan's present pro-Western orientation and the prevention of the resurgence of an armed and non-Communist Japan will be important Communist objectives in Asia during the period of this estimate. In pursuit of these objectives, the Communists will place economic, diplomatic, and psychological pressures on Japan in the attempt to encourage and exploit the Japanese sense of insecurity and desire for improved relations with the Bloc. Communist threats to Japan will continue to be coupled with offers of trade with Communist China and the Soviet Bloc. At the same time, the Japanese Communist Party will continue to agitate against the government and its pro-US policies and will attempt to increase its subversive potential and popular following.

36. *Indochina.* The Chinese Communists will probably continue their present type of support to the Viet Minh, but probably will not invade Indochina or introduce large numbers of combat troops in the guise of "volunteers."

Middle East and Africa

37. The Kremlin will probably conduct an increasingly active political warfare campaign in the Middle East and Africa. We believe that the USSR will make a major effort in the UN to court the Arab governments, and that within the countries of the Middle East and Africa the Communists will probably concentrate upon efforts to establish common fronts with nationalist and other anti-Western groups.

38. *Iran.* During the period of this estimate, the Tudeh Party in Iran will continue its ef-

orts to discredit the US and the Shah, to force the withdrawal of US military and economic missions, to weaken and divide the National Front, to infiltrate the bureaucracy and the security forces, and to stimulate riots and disorders. These tactics will probably increase Tudeh strength and influence. Although the many elements of uncertainty and instability in Iran make it difficult to estimate with assurance, we believe that the party will not regain legal status or develop sufficient strength to gain control of the government by infiltration or armed revolt during the period of this estimate. While continuing its support of Tudeh, the Kremlin is unlikely to take any drastic action to influence the Iranian situation except in the event of a far more serious deterioration of Iranian internal stability than is foreseen during the period of this estimate.⁸

Latin America

39. We believe that Communist strategy in Latin America during the period of this estimate will concentrate upon attempts to infiltrate and make use of nationalist parties and labor, student, and intellectual groups. The Communists will seek to exploit social and political unrest and anti-US sentiment in order to limit or obstruct Latin American cooperation with the US. The USSR will probably increase its efforts to detach the Latin American countries from the US in the UN and in other international organizations and will seek to enlarge the participation of Latin Americans in Communist-sponsored international labor and "peace" conferences.

⁸For a discussion of the elements of uncertainty and instability in Iran, see NIE-75, "Probable Developments in Iran through 1953," (13 November 1952).

CONCLUSIONS

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